



Creating Futures

South Slave Divisional Education Council – PO Box 510 – Fort Smith, NT – X0E 0P0 – Ph: (867) 872-5701 – Fax (867) 872-2150

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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South Slave Students Continue to Improve Test Scores

Results of 2006 Alberta Achievement Tests Suggests Initiatives Working

Fort Smith, NT – The trend of improvement continues for South Slave students writing the Alberta Achievement Tests (AAT). This year's test results once again indicate that area schools are offering quality education programs, as the majority of students are meeting or exceeding Alberta and national standards¹ in language arts and math. Results of Functional Grade Level assessments are equally encouraging.

Overall, 69.2 per cent of SSDEC grade 3, 6 and 9 students achieved or exceeded the Alberta standard in language arts and math, the second significant increase over the past two years. Of those students, 7.2 per cent achieved the standard of excellence in 2006. Other improvements over 2005 results include: 31.8 per cent more grade 9 students obtained the Alberta standard in math, 11 per cent more grade 9 students obtained the Alberta standard in language arts, eight per cent more students achieved the Alberta standard and three per cent more students achieved the standard of excellence.

Superintendent Curtis Brown says he is pleased with the AAT results. "The upward trend in language arts and math results reinforces our regional focus on improving literacy and numeracy, and developing effective homework and study habits. I believe the initiatives we have put in place are paying off for our students. It's also exciting to see that for the first time that I am aware, South Slave students scored as well in math as in language arts."

Although standardized tests are an instructive tool, Brown notes that a different group of students wrote the 2006 tests than the year prior, so comparisons should be considered in that light. Further, he cautions that many important learning outcomes cannot be measured by time limited paper and pencil tests alone. Brown adds, "Ongoing classroom based assessment gives us much more valuable information than a snapshot-in-time standardized test. We must strive to ensure that improving student achievement is not limited to just these test results. Student success in school and in life remains the shared responsibility of parents, teachers, administrators, education authorities, and the students themselves."

In addition, 81 per cent of grade 1 students were working at grade level, according to teacher assessments. An increase of 10 per cent of South Slave students in grades 1-3 were working at grade level over 2005. Functional Grade Level is a measure of the level at which a student is working in language arts and math for the majority of the school year, based on a variety of assessment and testing methods used by the classroom teachers.

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For more information contact Jayne Murray, South Slave Divisional Education Council, (867) 872-5701 ext 23, or jayne.murray@southslave.learnnet.nt.ca

¹ Alberta literacy standards and results are ranked the highest not only in Canada, but in the world. 2004 Canadian Education Association (CEA) Policy Brief, *The Promise and Problem of Literacy for Canada: An Agenda for Action*, p5.